



Alcohol and Substance Abuse: A Handbook for Clergy and Congregations

By Stephen P. Apthorp

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How does a minister respond to a cry for help when the concern is alcohol or drug abuse? With one out of eight adults in the country suffering from alcohol dependency or drug abuse and one out of four families distressed by someone's use of chemicals, clergy frequently deal with related problems whether they are willing and capable, or not. How does a congregation respond to a minister who might be suffering from chemical dependency? Clergy are just as likely to suffer from the disease as any lay person, and yet denominational leaders and superiors, called upon by concerned members of the congregation, may feel powerless to discern the truth and act. Though parishioners are often called on to deal with the chemically dependent person or those suffering from the fallout, few are trained in this area. And because few clergy are trained as treatment specialists, often they only make the problem worse through personal, empathetic involvement. Instead, *Alcohol and Substance Abuse* shows how clergy and laity can be pastoral problem solvers, not practitioners, through intervention and referral. Throughout, the aim is to provide spiritual answers to the spiritual questions of dispirited people. This is a how-to handbook with specific descriptions and suggestions, featuring a comprehensive list of organizations and agencies equipped to help.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Stephen P. Apthorp received his training in the problems of alcohol and drug abuse at the well-known Johnson Institute and Hazelden Foundation in Minneapolis and through doctoral studies at Andover Newton Theological Seminary in Boston.

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